



October 21, 2021

For Immediate Release

Contact: Ellis Mitchell, City Manager – (269) 927-8457 or emitchell@bhcity.us

City of Benton Harbor Water Main Break Repaired, Use of Bottled Water to Continue

Waters service restored, residents encouraged to flush pipes, keep using bottled water

(Benton Harbor, Michigan) -- The break in the City of Benton Harbor's water main has been repaired and water is being reintroduced to the city's pipes this afternoon, but residents are still encouraged to use bottled water for cooking, drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, rinsing foods, and mixing powdered infant formula according to state and local officials. The city will continue to be under a bottled water advisory out of an abundance of caution to reduce their risk for lead even after water services is restored.

The water must be reintroduced slowly to reduce the risk of additional main breaks and help ensure sediments are not stirred up in pipes, protective coating on the pipes is not disrupted, and other problems that may be caused by a fast, high-pressure water flow. Water may begin flowing to homes this afternoon or evening and residents may use it for flushing toilets and other essential activities. But officials ask that flushing of pipes, showering, and other high-volume usages wait until the system is fully pressurized.

The City of Benton Harbor worked with the State of Michigan and the Berrien County Health Department, as well as, many local community partners to provide additional bottled water while service is being fully restored. Bottled water deliveries were made throughout the day to homebound residents who could not visit a distribution site and were in need of emergency water supplies.

Residents can pick up free water on Friday, October 22nd at the Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency, 331 Miller St from 10am-2pm and God's Household of Faith, 275 Pipestone Rd. from 2pm-6pm. Residents who cannot not visit a distribution site and need emergency water delivery can call the Berrien County Health Department hotline at 1-800-815-5485 or 2-1-1, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The State Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) offers the following guidance for Benton Harbor residents to ensure health and safety in the wake of the water main break:

- Residents should continue to use bottled water for cooking, drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, rinsing foods, and mixing powdered infant formula.
- The city will continue to be under a bottled water advisory out of an abundance of caution to reduce the risk of lead even after water services is restored.
- After the water pressure is restored, residents should flush the water taps for five minutes before using the water for washing hands, showering or bathing.
- For faucets with removable aerators remove them first – small screens that trap sediments –remove them and clean any debris that has accumulated. [How to clean your aerator](#)
- The water may have discoloration after service is restored. This is due to sediment disruption within the water lines caused by the disruption in pressure. Residents should run water until it is clear before using for showering, bathing and other non-consuming activities.
- Flush toilets at least twice to move fresh water through the plumbing.
- For faucets and showers: If possible, remove faucet aerators before flushing. Run cold water taps at full flow for several minutes first, followed by hot water taps.
- Run an empty load in dishwashers and washing machines to clear the water lines.

Additional dates and locations for bottled water pick up will be added to make sure community needs are met. Information will be posted on [Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe](#).

###